

# The Micronesia and South Pacific Program

## A Decade of Cultural Resource Preservation Assistance

**T**ravels by Maradel Gale throughout the Pacific islands in 1984-85 provided the impetus for the development of a technical assistance (TA) program at the University of Oregon. While visiting a number of government agencies and organizations concerned with various enterprises ranging from land use controls to education, Gale found good intentions and on many occasions, few skills necessary to carry out their plans and tasks. Working as a professor with graduate students at the University of Oregon gave an awareness of the range of skills which could be transferred by these students to interested agencies in the islands.

The initial successes of a library development program generated support for an infusion of major funding by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Territorial and Insular Affairs (OTIA; now Office of Insular Affairs, OIA). These funds were to provide technical assistance to the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of

Micronesia. Eventually the program and funding sources expanded to include American Samoa and other nations in the south Pacific.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Program*

The basic tenets of the Micronesia and South Pacific Program (MSPP) were as follows:

- The program responded only to requests for assistance which came from the island governments, agencies, and organizations.
- A counterpart must be designated to work side-by-side with the technical assistant.
- The recipient agency/organization provided a supervisor for the designated project.
- The grant from OIA provided per diem and air fare for the technical assistant.
- The recipient agency/organization provided local housing for the technical assistant.

The placement of a technical assistant began with a request for assistance submitted to the MSPP by an eligible agency or organization in the Pacific islands. These positions were typically for projects that could be completed within a three-month period of residency by the technical assistant. Requests were cleared by the program director and the person in OIA responsible for oversight of the program. The program then recruited graduate students capable of meeting the needs of the agencies. Prior to their selection, potential technical assistants underwent a three-month training in intercultural communication. Adaptive skills were assessed during this time, both by the potential assistant and the training staff. At the end of the three months, qualified students were assigned to specific positions from among those approved to receive technical assistance.

It should be noted that this program was very different from the standard bilateral or multilateral development program. In those programs, the arrangements are between top levels of government, with the programs being developed

*Scott Fitzpatrick and Vicky Kanai (bottom left) with historic preservation office staff and National Park Service representatives, 1997. Photo by David Look.*



at the top. Funds are also transferred to the top, with little or no funding available for grassroots development projects. The projects are generally large-scale with the amount of funding per project matching that scale. While that approach can work reasonably well in a large country, it is often out of scale with the needs of small, isolated island nations. Multilateral development banks are ill-equipped to deal with small, low-cost projects.

#### ***Types of Projects Completed***

After the library development program, requests for assistance soon came from a much wider array of agencies and organizations. Over the course of 10 years, the MSPP has filled positions in agencies and organizations dealing with

education, health care delivery, women's issues, land use planning, cultural resources management and historic preservation, tourism, agriculture, manpower and economic development, and budget and finance, to name a few.

This diversity of projects enhanced the success of the program. Technical assistants were encouraged to assist their counterpart and supervisor to collaborate with other agencies and organizations that might be dealing with related issues or similar problems. In much of Micronesia, there is a high value placed on information, and as a result, it is not always shared. This means that skills learned may not be shared with others in similar situations. One of the

#### **Micronesia and South Pacific Program Cultural Resource Management Projects (1990-1999)**

<b>State</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Agency/Organization</b>
American Samoa	1997	GIS development	HPO
	1999	GIS development	HPO
Kosrae	1997	Eco-tourism management	Tourism Office
	1997	Utwa-Walung Marine Park	Tourism Office
Marshall Islands	1993	Tourism development plan	Tourism Office
Palau	1990	Management plan	HPO
	1990	Tourism/heritage management	Visitors Authority
	1992	National Register plan	HPO
	1995	Data management plan	HPO
	1996	Eco-tourism	Visitors Authority
	1997	Five year plan	HPO
	1998	Cultural/historic site brochures	HPO
Pohnpei	1990	Tourism development plan v. 1	Tourist Commission
	1992	Tourism development plan v. 2	Tourist Commission
	1992	Planning and management	HPO
	1992	Nan Madol plan	HPO
	1993	Tourism development plan v. 3	Tourist Commission
	1994	Library development	HPO
	1995	Tourism marketing plan	Tourist Commission
	1996	Maritime Museum development	HPO
	1997	Multi-year plan	HPO
Yap	1997	Kapingamarangi canoe building	HPO
	1993	Multi-year plan - phase I	HPO
	1994	Multi-year plan - phase II	HPO
	1996	Multi-year plan - phase III	HPO

attempts of the program was to encourage greater interaction between agencies for the express purpose of sharing knowledge and resources.

Among these projects, those dealing with historic preservation and cultural resource management have been some of the most successful. This is due, in part, to the continuance of research and skills transfer that have taken place after the completion of the initial three-month projects (through MSPP and other funding agencies), as well as the development of cooperative endeavors between historic preservation offices (HPOs) and other government agencies. MSPP-related projects have included the promotion of cultural resources, often in conjunction with the local tourism office, strategic planning, computer training, site identification, and fostering development of inter-agency cooperation.

#### ***Working with Cultural Resource Management Agencies***

With the dissolution of the Trust Territory of the Pacific into a milieu of independent states in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there has been increased interest by foreign investors, as well as local governments to increase revenue. Many development projects have been tourist related, while others have focused on maintaining or expanding infrastructure support. Both types of development can affect how successfully cultural and historical resources are preserved and protected. It is with this understanding that many HPOs in the Pacific have requested technical assistance from MSPP.

Since 1990, MSPP has been involved in 25 projects related to cultural resources management in Micronesia and American Samoa (see chart, page 39). Scott Fitzpatrick was involved with the 1997 Palau project where he developed and co-wrote a five year plan for cultural and historical resource preservation with Vicky Kanai (Chief/HPO). He also worked on the 1999 American Samoa project with Julie Taomia (senior archeologist, HPO) involving the training of staff on Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment.

The Palau five year plan outlined a strategy the HPO could take in better protecting and preserving the nation's cultural heritage. Part of this included communicating with other government agencies and ultimately the sharing of personnel

and information. This has since led to additional training projects led by Fitzpatrick, funded by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, the Bishop Museum's East-West Center, the National Science Foundation, and Sigma Xi. These have dealt with archeological survey and mapping, aided by such agencies as the Bureau of Lands and Survey, which shared equipment and data, provided technical expertise, and helped in the installation and use of a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) workstation at the HPO.

The American Samoa project involved the training and field-based application of GPS for surveying and mapping archeological and historical sites. Aided by the National Park of American Samoa, which lent GPS receivers, the project collected data to determine the most feasible means for recording WWII-era installations on Tutuila, and developed standardized procedures for gathering this information.

These two projects were significantly different in terms of content, types and duration of field activities, and geographical location. However, the overall intentions were the same—to increase the effectiveness of data collection, nurture inter-agency collaboration, and devise ways for the public to become more aware and involved with cultural resource management. We believe MSPP has played an important role in this effort.

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#### **Note**

Micronesia and South Pacific Program technical assistance activities are currently in abeyance due to cutbacks in federal funding.

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